

Graeme Logan
Deputy Director of Learning
The Scottish Government

31 May 2018

Dear Graeme,

I am writing to follow up our meeting on Monday 21 May. I enjoyed our conversation and I hope it is the first of many. We agreed that we would schedule a meeting or a call every month. The purpose of our meetings will be to discuss strategic issues relating to the SNSA project and its contribution to the broader National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education. We can also use the meetings to address any major issues that are having a negative impact on project implementation which cannot be resolved at the project team level.

As I said at our meeting, I have been struck by the very substantial achievements of the SNSA project to date. I have also been impressed by the close collaboration between your team, Redacted - 1 word - exemption applies and the ACER team as well as our implementation partners from Twig and Scholar. Setting up an online national assessment with an innovative approach to adaptive testing in three core subjects across four year groups is no small task. And doing all of this from scratch in less than two years is a remarkable achievement of which your team and all the implementation partners should feel justly proud.

I know there have been some challenges along the way and there will no doubt be issues to deal with in the future. I am also aware that there will always be critics who will challenge your department to justify this initiative. But I think it is important to reflect on the achievements to date and in particular to note the positive feedback that is beginning to emerge from teachers, head teachers and members of the local authorities and inspection teams who can see the value of the data which the assessment will provide to improve the learning for all of Scotland's children.

Please be assured that I and all of the ACER team in the UK and Australia are fully committed to working with your team to achieve this outcome.

We discussed the possibility of Geoff Masters participating in next year's Learning Festival which I believe is scheduled for September 2019. This would provide a good opportunity to reflect on the experience of two years of the SNSA and the lessons we can learn from it. Geoff has confirmed that he would be happy to participate in that event. We also discussed the possibility of establishing a link between your minister and his counterparts in Australia. As I am sure you are aware ACER is working very closely with national and state governments in Australia on ambitious reforms that have a number of similarities to the Scottish reform agenda, including the initiation of national on line assessments this year. I suggest we discuss at our next meeting in June how to share experiences and learning from Scotland to Australia and vice versa.

I hope that this meeting marks the beginning of a new phase of a strong collaborative relationship between your department and the ACER team in the UK and Australia.

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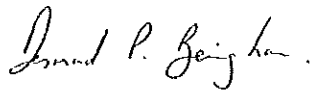
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Best regards,



Dr Desmond Bermingham,
Chief Executive
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